

The Nation

FOUNDED 1865

Vol. CXXXV

NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, JULY 6, 1932

No. 3496

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SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Five dollars per annum postpaid in the United States; to Canada, \$6.50; and to other foreign countries, \$6.00.

THE NATION, No. 20 Vesey Street, New York City, Cable Address: NATION, New York. British Agent of Subscriptions and Advertising, Miss Gertrude M. Cross, 23 Brunswick Square, London W. C. 1, England.

IN THE CONFUSION that besets the Democratic convention as we go to press one thing stands out clear and unchallengeable. That is the unashamed renunciation by Franklin D. Roosevelt of his last pretension to progressivism. He has joined the old guard of political sharpers. Indeed, the brazen tactics of his managers in Chicago, which the Governor himself has been directing by telephone from Albany, are such as to leave even the Tammany crowd gasping. His opponents should have been forewarned by his repudiation of his promise to support Jouett Shouse for the permanent chairmanship of the convention. But they were obviously not prepared for the next move in the Roosevelt program; they were taken by surprise when the Roosevelt managers announced, with the approval of the Governor, that they would seek to abolish the ancient rule of the party whereby a Presidential nominee is chosen by a two-thirds vote. Such a change in the convention rules requires only a majority vote. The Roosevelt announcement was simply a confession of fear that the New York Governor could not win by following the established rules of the game. Of course, except in form and audacity, there is nothing particularly new in this latest manifestation of American political ethics. Yet we had hoped for something better from Franklin Roosevelt. We had never deceived ourselves as to his weak and vacillating statesmanship, but we had believed him honest and sincere. Instead, he stands revealed as ready to lend his support to any trick or device that will advance his personal political fortunes. Even more discouraging was the failure of such supposedly Progressive Senators as Burton Wheeler and Clarence Dill to disown Roosevelt when he showed his true colors.

MR. HOOVER'S FEAR of pork-barrel legislation is holding up urgently needed federal relief for the unemployed. There may be "pork" in the Wagner and Garner bills, but Herbert Hoover did not see the matter in that light when he was sponsoring similar public-works construction programs only two years ago. *The Nation* no less than Herbert Hoover is opposed to raids upon the Treasury, to acts of Congress designed to confer special privileges or benefits upon favored communities or classes. There may be political favoritism hidden in the two bills now before Congress. But the unemployment situation cannot wait upon moral crusaders; the hungry millions cannot wait until the perfect bill is written. Help must be extended at once. Need it be said again that Chicago, Detroit, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, New York, and numerous other cities are now feeding their jobless on a hand-to-mouth basis, and that their relief programs may break down at any moment leaving hundreds of thousands of families without help of any kind? The Wagner and Garner bills are not so far apart that they cannot be reconciled by the conferees of the two houses. The sentiment in both branches of Congress is such that virtually any reasonable bill for unemployment relief can be passed almost unanimously. It rests with the conferees to expedite action. They should divest themselves of their childish fear of incurring Mr. Hoover's displeasure. They have enough votes to pass any honest relief measure over the President's veto.

STILL FURTHER PROOF of the repression to come is to be found in Speaker Garner's announcement of his candidacy for the Presidency. He came out against prohibition and the high tariff, for "proper relief measures" to keep the laboring classes at work, for the collection of war debts according to the capacity of our debtors to pay, and for the reduction of federal, State, and municipal expenditures by one-third—a stupid and silly plank which might defeat the possibility of putting the unemployed to work. Then he went on to say this: "The constantly increasing tendency toward socialism and communism is the gravest possible menace. The government should use every means within its power to prevent their further spread, and they should receive no encouragement from any American citizen, high or low." This from a man whose party is now definitely committed to protection, the mother of all socialism in America; which has voted for the socialistic Federal Farm Board, and has had no hesitation whatever in ladling out millions to indigent railroads and banks without understanding that if carried on far enough that means nothing more or less than state ownership. What a pity that someone cannot put Mr. Garner on a witness stand and examine him as to what constitutes true Americanism and what constitutes socialism and communism!

THE INDIANA DEMOCRATS have nominated a former National Commander of the American Legion, Paul V. McNutt, as their candidate for Governor, and the Republicans have countered by nominating a former State

Commander of the Legion, Raymond S. Springer. The voters have thus no choice save to vote for a legionnaire unless they vote the Socialist ticket. History is thus repeating itself; for decades after the Civil War ex-officers were regularly chosen to catch the soldier vote. In Congress Northern brigadiers and Southern brigadiers vied with each other in "waving the bloody shirt" and in keeping sectional animosities alive for purely political reasons. We are in for something worse now, for the Civil War veterans were not militarists, if they were as thirsty for pensions and jobs as the World War veterans are for bonuses and special favors. They were satisfied to have no fleet and to keep the regular army down to 25,000 men as long as the nineteenth century lasted. The present veterans are all for big armaments afloat and ashore—despite our winning the war to end war—besides being utterly un-American in their readiness to limit free speech and other constitutional rights. The latest proof of this is the ousting from the Legion of the Willard Straight Post in New York, because it has frequently dared to disagree with Legion policies and recently exposed the shocking waste and extravagance in the Veterans' Bureau—a public service the Legion should have rejoiced in.

THE STREET FIGHTING in Germany will very likely have more influence on the negotiations now being undertaken at Lausanne than any other factor. Were it not for the uncertainties of the domestic situation in the largest of the Central Powers some new arrangement, some new plan, could probably be devised at the reparations conference. But no German delegation can afford to return to Berlin with anything short of undisguised cancellation. This Chancellor von Papen has already learned. His rather clumsy effort to be tactful and to appear conciliatory during the opening days of the Lausanne meeting has met with withering attacks from every political faction at home. Most direct and bitter have been the attacks upon him by his own supporters, the nationalists and militarists. A political upheaval in Germany today would be dangerous for the security and peace of the Continent. But it is difficult to see how such an upheaval can be prevented if Lausanne does not renounce the entire reparations system, the barren principles as well as the unmet payments. Premier Herriot has shown at Lausanne that France is willing to make what two years ago would have been considered extravagant concessions. But France is not yet ready to abandon the principle of reparations, for upon it, the French declare, rests the peace of Versailles, the status quo of Europe. Even the French may have to recognize in the end that the economic security of Germany is just as essential to the peace of Europe as is the political security of France.

PUBLICATION of the correspondence between the former Minister of Agriculture in the Brüning Cabinet and President von Hindenburg explains very clearly why it was that the President suddenly made an about-face and ousted Brüning without warning, and confirms in a remarkable way the statements made by John Elliott in his Berlin letter in our last week's issue. It is now definitely established through this correspondence that the break was solely due to the government's desire to take hold of the legally bankrupt estates of some of the great East Prussian landlords and to split them up in order to settle upon them some

of the 6,000,000 jobless whose presence is such a menace to the economic and political safety of Germany. The Brüning Government had shown its willingness to help the land barons by declaring a moratorium on their debts, especially in order to save the eastern agricultural banks, which could not collect more than a small percentage of their loans. But in those cases where estates were hopelessly bankrupt the Cabinet proposed to take them over and break them up. The land barons appealed to President von Hindenburg, who was then staying at his own East Prussian estate, with the result that he wrote to the Minister of Agriculture that the proposed sale of bankrupt properties was "confiscation." The Minister resigned, but the President returned to Berlin, ousted the whole Cabinet, and turned the welfare of Germany, employed and unemployed, over to a group of these East Prussian landlords who have been the real dominators of Germany ever since the days of Bismarck.

VISCOUNT ISHII has warned us that if the United States "ever attempted to prevent Japan's natural expansion" on the Asiatic mainland, "then a grave situation would indeed be created, since Japan is an overcrowded nation which could not be shut up indefinitely in her small islands." This sounds like a threat of war. Yet viewed realistically it must be considered a courageous statement of fact. Ishii has done both countries a great service in pointing out that the conflicting policies of Japan and the United States in Asia, unless checked in time, will certainly lead to armed conflict. Only by such warnings, only by knowing precisely where our diplomacy is likely to lead us, can we so shape our policies as to prevent war with Japan. Economic pressure has pushed our frontier ever westward; today our western frontier is in Asia itself. We have marked out China as an American market of immense potentialities. Under the Open Door policy, of course, we assume that we are giving all countries, and particularly Japan, an equal opportunity to do business in that market. But so vast are our natural resources and so highly developed is our industrial system that the real advantages are all on our side. Thus Japan is in no position to compete with us on equal terms except by pauperizing its labor, and it is the poverty of its workers that is the compelling force behind "Japan's natural expansion." The Open Door, paradoxically enough, stands in the way of this expansion. Washington and Tokio must come to a new understanding on the Asiatic problem.

WHERE IS THAT VAUNTED UPTURN in Great Britain so glibly promised by the National Government and so often presented in this country as an accomplished fact? Notwithstanding the departure from the gold standard, the resort to protective tariffs, and the unholy alliance of Messrs. MacDonald, Chamberlain, Samuel, *et al.*, reports issued by the Board of Trade show a drop in exports, chiefly of manufactured goods, from £33,895,429 in May, 1931, to £30,196,984 in May of this year. Unemployment rose 89,125 in May over the April figures, and was 111,335 more than in May of last year, while the number of persons on poor relief in England and Wales at the end of last April was 191,318 in excess of the number twelve months before. But the reactionary leaders go blandly on their way, running true to form even on such humanitarian

matters as child labor; a proposal in Parliament to limit children's working hours to forty-eight a week has been killed by the government. Despite the expenditure of £108,000,000 annually on armaments, Britain has been seeking a cut in the \$6,750,000 budget of the League of Nations, the British share of which reaches the "enormous" total of \$708,750. Faced with discontent among the working classes, the authorities, according to the *London New Leader*, have been collecting information through the agency of engineering societies on such significant questions as these: "In an emergency, are you willing to volunteer to maintain the London electricity-supply service?" "Did you serve during the general strike of 1926; if so, at what station and in what capacity?"

ALL HONOR TO GOVERNOR ELY of Massachusetts, who has appointed Felix Frankfurter of the Harvard Law School to the Supreme Court of Massachusetts. It is not yet clear that the appointment will be confirmed; the heathen, headed by ex-Governor Fuller, are raging because Professor Frankfurter was one of the leaders in the fight to save the lives of Sacco and Vanzetti, whom thousands besides himself believed innocent, because his heart and his conscience and his admirable legal mind made it impossible for him to take any other course. The ex-Governor upon whose head rests the responsibility for the death of those men has gone out of his way to declare that this appointment means the encouragement of murder in Massachusetts. Nothing could be falser, nothing more deliberately malign. We cannot think of anybody better fitted to adorn the Supreme Court bench in Massachusetts than Felix Frankfurter, and we cannot think of any bench that more needs liberalizing than this same Supreme Court. We earnestly hope for early confirmation of the appointment, but whether it comes or not we have here another interesting example of the way murder will not down. No Fullers and no courts can consign Sacco and Vanzetti to oblivion. Massachusetts may yet see a memorial to these men erected on its soil, as it erected statues to the memory of Garrison and Phillips three decades after they were mobbed in the streets of Boston.

SIAM, almost the last speck of absolute monarchy left on the map, has had a revolution. With great neatness and dispatch, and politeness all around, the People's Party has arrested the cabinet of princes whose extravagance and dishonesty led to the revolt. The king, with equal politeness and dispatch, has agreed to be a constitutional monarch. To be sure, there are certain contradictions to be recorded. The People's Party is composed of young and idealistic government officials and of middle-aged army and navy officers; the people, for whom the party is named, took no part in the revolution; finally, the leaders of the new ruling party have declared themselves, according to the fulsome report of the *Herald Tribune* correspondent, in favor of "frank criticism of all governmental matters, despite strict censorship." Nevertheless, everyone is reported pleased, and it is gratifying to note that there were only two casualties. One was a brave general who resisted and was shot but not killed. The other casualty turns out, fortunately, to have been exaggerated. A policeman previously reported shot was, it is now revealed, only frightened half to death.

Monkeys and Men

THE evolutionists," said G. K. Chesterton in a particularly malicious moment, "seem to know everything about the missing link except the fact that it is missing." And though the jibe may not be entirely fair, it is keen enough to make every believer in the Darwinian theory just a little bit uncomfortable. It would be nicer if the ascent of man could be demonstrated with a series of skeletons as complete as that which illustrates how the eohippus lost his toes in order to become a horse, and there is no doubt about the fact that the hypothetical creatures christened with such resounding names as *Pithecanthropus erectus* and *Homo neanderthalensis* would be somewhat more convincing if the fragments supposed to represent them were a little less fragmentary.

For that reason it is impossible not to suspend one's better judgment and take some interest in the wild story which concerns the discovery of some living specimens of an "ape man" in Sumatra. According to Professor Eliot Smith, Marco Polo told stories concerning the existence of such creatures 700 years ago, but though even more detailed rumors of its continued existence were circulated in 1924, nothing concrete emerged. Nevertheless, photographs are said to have arrived in Holland, and in a dispatch to the *New York Times* Professor Smith confesses that "there is nothing inherently improbable in the possibility that some type of ape with human likeness may have survived in the forests of Sumatra."

Being, however, even more interested in human nature than we are in anthropology, there is another aspect of the present incident which interests us more than the vague possibility that one of the more backward branches of our family is still climbing trees in the Dutch East Indies. This aspect is the one suggested by a paragraph in the dispatch which throws even more light on the present nature of man than the discovery itself is likely to throw upon his past. The account reads:

Some time ago the Governor of Sumatra offered a reward for a specimen, dead or alive, of the orang letjo, supposed to live in the Rokan Mountains. Hundreds of men searched the forests near the mountains and one discovered the orang letjo with a baby. The hunter wounded the mother and killed the baby. The mother escaped, running on her hind legs. The baby was taken to the Dutch authorities and the skin was carefully removed and prepared, while the skeleton was cleaned, packed, and sent to the Batavia Zoological Museum.

Evidently ape men are regarded in much the same way as other "natives" are regarded by the advance guard of white civilization, and the incident will perhaps go a long way toward explaining why the missing link is still missing. As soon as the first man discovered that he really was a man at last, he doubtless set about to exterminate as rapidly as possible all those creatures who had not yet risen to his heights. Indeed, we suspect that the emergence of this impulse may be taken as the criterion of true humanness, and that the first creature who discovered the delights of slaughter for its own sake is the one which ought to be taken as the first indisputable man.

Butler, Borah, and Bunk

"**W**OULD to God we could exchange a thousand politicians for even one statesman!" With this magnificent phrase Nicholas Murray Butler concluded his speech to the Advertising Federation of the United States on June 20, appealing once more for a rational, a sane, a generous policy toward Europe. It was an admirable address, admirable in its content, admirable in its expression and in its wisdom. It could not have been delivered to an audience that needed it more. We have noticed with regret Dr. Butler's departure for Europe. It would be of great usefulness, indeed, if some of the frequently wasted revenues of his own Carnegie Peace Foundation could be utilized to keep him speaking from one end of the country to the other. For since his renunciation of his own candidacy for the Presidency, he has been able to speak out as American public men ought always to speak out, and as many of them used to in bygone days. When he talks today he makes most of the office-holders of the type of Speaker Garner and the Honorable Patrick Hurley and the ineffable Secretary Wilbur, who recently dared to assure the social workers of the nation in Philadelphia that the starving children of this country would profit by the bad times, look like the cheap politicians that they are. This does not mean we believe Dr. Butler has undergone an entire sea change. We should expect him, should war come again, to lead the hue and cry once more, and again to drive out of his university men who had the character and the conscience to stick by the beliefs that they professed before hostilities commenced. He shines, however, because he is informed on many points, and because he hits straight from the shoulder. And what this country needs more than anything else today is informed speaking and able analytical criticism of the projects that are so lightly tossed off by the politicians.

Just this kind of criticism was furnished by Senator Borah in his remarkable speech of last week, when he announced that he would not support the Republican platform, or at least that plank which deals with prohibition. Senator Borah, too, is not always dependable—this utterance of his has been met by many sneers to the effect that, come election day, the Senator from Idaho will be back voting and speaking for the good old Republican Party. That may come to pass. None the less, we are profoundly grateful that in this address he rose to the finest that was in him, and not only showed his admirably equipped legal mind at its best, but phrased his thoughts in clear, able, and convincing language. No reasoning person could read that speech and not be affected by it. We do not see how any Republican politician can hereafter get up on any platform and have the effrontery to assure his audience that the prohibition plank in the Republican platform means something. The words of Senator Borah will be there to confront and confound him. The Senator took that barefaced swindle and dissected it like a skilful surgeon. He showed how completely it contradicted itself; how it was impossible to strip the United States of the constitutional right to control the liquor traffic by passing on the power to the States, and then to reserve to the United States the same power to prevent the return of the

saloon. Never was a colossal humbug more completely and definitely exposed. Naturally there was consternation in the Republican camp, especially when the Senator declared that he would not support Mr. Hoover if the latter did not disavow this shameless effort to deceive both wets and dries into believing that the party is on both their sides.

But Senator Borah's service did not stop there. He proceeded, and has since continued, to unveil some of the hypocrites in the Cabinet who have pretended one thing while believing another. If there is a greater curse in our political life today than this, we do not know it. We are of the opinion that in some ways the political life of America has improved in the last forty years, but we doubt if there ever was a period in which there was such widespread insincerity as there is today. It is not due to prohibition. That merely gave another opportunity to those who were already in the habit of believing one thing and giving lip service to another. It is of course not considered good form in political circles to do what Senator Borah has done in exposing the real beliefs of two such men as Postmaster-General Brown and Secretary Mills by repeating the substance of conversations. But if ever there was a time when this was allowable it is today in the face of the colossal Republican effort to deceive the American people. Can anyone believe that Secretary Mills, with his record, favors prohibition in the slightest degree? Does anyone really believe that Senator Borah falsified when he declared that the Postmaster-General had assured him quite recently that he was in favor of the return of the saloon? When it comes to weighing the character of these two men in the balance, no court of record would have the slightest difficulty in deciding where the truth lay. We note that the Postmaster-General has not denied Mr. Borah's reiteration of his charge after Mr. Brown's first denial. These two speeches have cut through the bunk of the hour in a way to refresh weary souls.

They embolden us to hope that the hour is approaching when, because of the gravity of the crisis or as a final revulsion from the hypocrisy and humbug of the hour, other voices will be heard to command instant attention throughout the country, and what is more important to arouse an enlightened public opinion. The cowardly, crawling satellites around the White House talk glibly about their being controlled by public opinion, and about how they cannot utter a single brave word or take an advanced position because the public is not yet ready to have them do so. The way to lead is to lead. Mr. Hoover found that out when he recommended the moratorium just a year ago. Mr. Roosevelt has not yet discovered it because he has been playing the same old stupid politicians' game of waiting to see whether he could get the nomination by hiding his views, by pussyfooting, by talking those glittering generalities in which the American politician excels beyond all of his kind. As we have again and again pointed out, there has never been an hour when we needed greater frankness and truth-telling, with the determination to free our political life "from the black magic of dead words." In no other way will it be possible in this crisis to keep alive men's faith in their institutions.

Hoover Politics at Geneva

THE proposals placed before the Geneva Disarmament Conference on June 22 by President Hoover amount to little more than a political trick. To the headline reader Mr. Hoover has generously advocated a reduction in armies by one-third and a similar scaling down of navies. Studied in detail, however, the Hoover proposals amount to the brazen suggestion that the United States actually increase its army and navy, leaving reduction to other nations. The President declares that an army performs two functions: (1) that of maintaining internal order, (2) that of defense against foreign attack. He states that the German army was limited to 100,000 men by the Treaty of Versailles because the Paris Peace Conference deemed this figure the minimum needed to maintain German internal order. The President suggests that every government take the German unit as a basis for limiting its army for police purposes and then make a cut of one-third in all effectives maintained for "defense" purposes, above the number necessary for internal police. According to this formula, the United States, which with its dependencies has a population twice that of Germany, would actually increase its army from 140,000 to 200,000 men for "police" purposes; and in addition maintain an undefined number for "defense" against foreign attack. The President's proposal to abolish tanks is hardly more generous. Having only twenty-five tanks in our army we can afford to renounce a weapon upon which the French and British armies heavily rely. Similarly, the President proposes a reduction in the *treaty* tonnage of navies; but inasmuch as the United States, except in the case of battleships, has not built up to the level established by the Washington and London naval treaties, his suggestion would inevitably result in new cruiser and aircraft-carrier construction by the United States. The Hoover "disarmament" plan, therefore, would increase the military strength of the United States at the expense of other nations; it is a scheme for securing naval "parity" at a cheaper figure than that made necessary by the London treaty, and for nearly doubling the size of our army.

We are unable to see how any sensible man can assert that the United States should have an army of 200,000 men to maintain internal order. The creation of such an army to perform functions already discharged by local and State police would inevitably mean the terrorizing of the unemployed; it would be a step toward a fascist dictatorship. For that matter, the "defensive" needs of this country, "menaced" only by Canada and Mexico, do not even require the maintenance of our present extravagant establishment of 140,000 men—we never had more than 30,000 men prior to 1900. Likewise there is no reason except unadulterated vanity which justifies our demand for naval parity. When the United States, the one great Power which is in absolutely no danger of invasion, proposes in this hypocritical manner to enlarge its army and navy, it quickens the feeling of insecurity throughout the world.

There is only one means by which the United States can secure the reduction of armaments and that is by offering to make sacrifices equivalent to those which it asks of other

governments. The key to the arms deadlock is the battleship. The one argument made by our big-navy champions for retaining the battleship is that the United States has only a few naval bases. Great Britain may dispense with the battleship because it has a large number of bases at which small cruisers may refuel. The United States, in the absence of such bases, must maintain battleships having a wide cruising radius. One does not need to be a naval "expert" to realize, however, that the battleship will not offset inferiority in naval bases. When the United States agreed in the Washington naval treaty not to establish any new bases in the Pacific, it was universally recognized that this renunciation could not possibly be offset by the construction of the battleships authorized in that treaty. In the absence of naval bases no American fleet, no matter how numerous our capital ships may be, can hope to carry on a decisive action in western Pacific waters. In what other part of the world may battleships offset our naval-base inferiority? Not in the Caribbean, which we completely dominate by bases at Panama and Guantanamo; nor in the Atlantic, where no Power possesses modern bases removed from its home territory. In the remaining parts of the world, such as the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean, it is inconceivable, from the political or strategic standpoint, that the United States would single-handed carry on a naval engagement, regardless of the number of our battleships.

The reason that our big-navy advocates insist upon retaining the battleship is because of an illegitimate and inept desire to dominate the seas. Actually, the supremacy of the battleship is already doomed by the airplane and the submarine. The ineffectiveness of this type of ship was indicated by the World War. Moreover, in accepting the London naval treaty of 1930 the United States has already dealt a death-blow to the battleship. In that treaty we agreed to postpone the replacement of our fifteen ships until 1936. One cannot believe that the American people will at that time authorize the expenditure of \$600,000,000 to replace vessels which will then be over age. Even though we hold on to these clumsy sea-arsenals for a few more years, they are inevitably doomed. Meanwhile the maintenance of our fifteen battleships costs the American people the enormous sum of \$30,000,000 annually.

Today the Geneva conference is in danger of collapse. Every effort at disarmament which fails enhances world insecurity and thereby increases the danger of war and obstructs world economic recovery. If failure is to be the result of the five years' tedious work of the League Preparatory Commission, and of five months' negotiation by the conference itself, then inevitably the world will be brought one step nearer the catastrophe which it is already approaching. Despite Mr. Hoover's blunder, we believe that the Geneva conference can yet be saved if the United States has the intelligence and courage to propose the abolition of the battleship. Such a proposal, indicating that we were prepared to make a genuine reduction, would make it possible to secure the international abolition of all aggressive weapons, on land, on sea, and in the air, and thus achieve the beginning of success.

What Is Soviet Russia?

By LOUIS FISCHER

Moscow, June 14

I HAD no sooner said in *The Nation* that bolshevism was not a religion than Henry R. Mussey undertook to show that it was. The friends of Soviet Russia declared it could not be true that the Bolsheviks were ready to pay the Czar's debts, and the enemies of Russia wrote to protest against my assertion that there were liberties in the U. S. S. R. Socialists who had always been proud of Menshevik Georgia objected to my quotation marks around "independent" as applied to one of the few Social Democratic republics which the world has seen, and the same people insisted that the sameness of revolutions in all countries was one of the fundamental tenets of bolshevism. Apparently, the mere assertion that many of our popular conceptions about Russia are fallacious is not sufficient, and I have been called upon to prove them wrong. A few of the more difficult notions to refute were chosen for me.

1. *That there is no freedom or liberty in Soviet Russia.*

This statement is heard frequently in America and England but seldom on the Continent; for intellectuals in Europe know that if and when the social revolution beckons, there will no longer be a choice between Communist dictatorship and bourgeois democracy. Experience has shown that long before bolshevism appears on the horizon, democracy is wiped out by a fascist dictatorship. In Hungary, Poland, Yugoslavia, Italy, and to a rapidly increasing extent in Germany, the alternatives are capitalist dictatorship and white terror on the one hand and Soviet dictatorship on the other. Each citizen's preference is then determined not by his love for a long-deceased freedom of speech or an extinguished parliamentarianism, but by his economic interests and class or group affiliations.

The Bolshevik regime is avowedly a class regime. The capitalist class is denied all civil rights. The bourgeois enjoys no liberty or rights until he quits his class—a process usually attended by some difficulty. The workers and peasants, however—and these constitute at least 95 per cent of the population of the Soviet Union—have numerous privileges and liberties never vouchsafed to them before the revolution. Yet even they surrender a considerable measure of freedom to the dictatorship. Bolshevism brought new, undreamt-of freedom to women, to national minorities, to children, to factory workers. The educational, cultural, and social progress achieved by the tens of millions included under these large divisions refutes any allegation that there is no liberty in Russia. The right to study, the opportunity to use one's own language and to follow one's own racial customs, and the relief from worry about unemployment or illness or old age or the higher education of one's children are at least as precious as the right to say and write what one wishes. Nevertheless, free speech is an invaluable asset to the individual and the state. It serves as a check on governmental error and unrestrained empiricism. But in Russia even the Bolshevik does not enjoy complete freedom of expression, and the non-Communist, even if a devoted friend of the Soviets, is condemned to silence on political matters.

The repressions in this field are more severe than the safety of the government requires.

2. *That the New Economic Policy introduced by Lenin in 1921 meant the return of capitalism to Russia.* When the New Economic Policy (NEP) was enunciated, many Communists and most outsiders believed that it would usher in capitalism. This prophecy, along with a host of others, has not been fulfilled. Lenin never intended to bury communism under a heavy gravestone marked NEP. For while the NEP permitted the peasants to sell grain privately, and thus paved the way to the rise of a bourgeois class of traders, Lenin nevertheless provided for the retention of the "proletarian heights"—the monopoly of foreign trade, state ownership of industry, transportation, and land, of the army, the Communist Party, and so on—with the aid of which another offensive against capitalism in Russia would some day be undertaken. Between 1921 and 1927 the great issue was "Who Whom?" as the Bolsheviks formulated it. Would private trade and individualistic farming creep up to and capture the "proletarian heights" and thereby wrest real power from the Communists, or would the "proletarian heights" reconquer the plains that had been abandoned during the NEP retreat? Now the reply is no longer in doubt; the "proletarian heights" are crushing the last items of strength in Russian capitalism. Private capitalism in the U. S. S. R. is being ground to death between a nether millstone called collectivization and an upper millstone called the Five-Year Plan. Sometimes the hand of the miller tires, and then private capitalistic tendencies win a breathing space which is called "neo-NEP." There will be many such respites. There have been many. But the length and frequency of these "rightward zigzags" diminish, and the death warrant of Russian capitalism is signed and sealed.

3. *That the Bolsheviks have refused to pay Czarist debts.* The Soviet Government annulled the foreign obligations of the Russian state on January 21, 1918. But since then it has on scores of occasions offered to pay those very obligations. In a letter to the Versailles Peace Conference dated February 4, 1919, Moscow volunteered to "recognize its financial obligations to its creditors in Entente countries" and to guarantee interest payments on them. Lenin gave William C. Bullitt a written proposal for transmission to President Wilson "to recognize their [the Soviets'] responsibility for the financial obligations of the former Russian Empire [date, March 14, 1919]." The Soviet Government officially informed Premier Lloyd George on July 7, 1920, of its willingness to meet Russia's indebtedness to Great Britain. At the Genoa and Hague conferences in 1922 the Russians made concrete suggestions for the payment of Russia's debts. All these acts are on record, and if people still believe that the Bolsheviks have always refused to pay the Czar's obligations, it is only because they do not read or have short memories. The last Bolshevik statement about readiness to negotiate on this subject was made by Stalin on December 1, 1930, to Walter Duranty of the *New York Times*.

The Soviet Government, however, has not confined itself to offers. On August 10, 1924, Ramsay MacDonald and Christian G. Rakovsky actually signed an Anglo-Soviet treaty which provided for a definite settlement of England's private and public claims on Russia. This treaty, for no fault of the Bolsheviks, failed of ratification by the House of Commons. Very concrete offers of immediate payments in gold were also made to France in 1926 and incorporated by Senator de Monzie into draft treaties which Poincaré, however, rejected.

The Soviet Government has settled the General Electric Company's claim for compensation for nationalized property. It has likewise negotiated with the National City Bank of New York for the payment of a Czarist war debt of \$86,000,000. Those negotiations may be renewed. Moscow has even agreed to repay the moneys lent by the United States Treasury to Kerensky and used to buy munitions which shot down Red Army soldiers. All these and other pertinent facts are set forth in detail in my book, "The Soviets in World Affairs."

4. *That the Bolsheviks believe revolutions in other countries must be exactly like their own.* Lenin said that the revolution made by the Bolsheviks in November, 1917, was a bourgeois revolution. It was bourgeois while the workers helped the peasantry to achieve its petit-bourgeois, capitalist aims by ousting the landlords. Only later, when the class war provoked the enmity of the poor peasants against the rich, did bolshevism reach the villages. And only now, when collectivization dominates agriculture in Russia, is a real attempt being made to create a Socialist system of agriculture. But a Bolshevik revolution in a highly industrialized country where feudalism had long been destroyed would not be bourgeois even in its initial stages. It would be Socialist. This is not a mere academic distinction. Trotzky says that a Socialist revolution is impossible until the Communists have won over "a majority of the proletariat." That was not altogether necessary in Russia in 1917 because the peasants cooperated with the Bolsheviks in order to carry out their own democratic, bourgeois uprising. But most land-owning farmers in an industrialized nation will support the bourgeoisie against the revolutionists. The revolutionists must therefore first rally the larger half of the working class. This is a fundamental social distinction. It indicates that the preliminaries of a revolution in Germany or England would be very different from the preliminaries of the Soviet revolution.

On the other hand, the Bolsheviks submit that anti-capitalist revolutions abroad would correspond in important respects to their own. They insist, for instance, that the capitalists would resist the expropriation of their private wealth (although we all know that they have submitted to plenty of expropriation since 1929) and resort to force in an effort to suppress the expropriators. Hence the belief that every Communist upheaval must be accompanied by civil war. There would be other partial imitations of the Russian example. Yet these similarities must not be allowed to conceal the distinctions. The foreign political situation, for instance, would play a great role. A revolution in Germany where neighbors might intervene would not face the same set of circumstances as in Japan where intervention would be difficult if not impossible. In Italy in 1920 the first step toward a proletarian revolution was the seizure of the fac-

tories. The Russians, on the other hand, first captured the streets. A revolutionary party which set out to dislodge a fascist regime would have a task very different from that of the Bolsheviks in overthrowing the liberal Kerensky. Every revolution must have its own physiognomy depending on time and local conditions. Lenin recognized this fact and wrote:

In no sense do we regard the Marxist theory as something complete and unassailable. On the contrary, we are convinced that that theory is only the cornerstone of that science which Socialists must advance in all directions if they do not wish to fall behind life. We think that it is especially necessary for Russian Socialists to undertake an independent study of the Marxist theory, for that theory gives only general guiding ideas, which can be applied differently in England, for instance, than in France, differently in France than in Germany, differently in Germany than in Russia.

5. *That Bolsheviks constitute 1 or 2 per cent of the population of the Soviet Union.* The Communist Party of the Soviet Union numbers two million-odd members and candidates. In addition, there are about five million Young Communists in the Komsomol, who, ranging from eighteen to twenty-five years of age, share the responsibilities of government and participate actively in politics. Youth rules in Russia, and twenty is a ripe age. This makes 7,000,000 out of a population of 160,000,000, or roughly 4½ per cent.

But when it is said that the Communists are only 1 or 2 per cent of the population, there is always the implication that the Communists, therefore, are unpopular and impose their rule on a protesting majority. This, and not percentages, is the real issue. The best plebiscite that has been held in Soviet Russia was the civil war. At one time in 1918 the Bolsheviks controlled nothing more than Moscow and a few adjacent provinces. The whites, aided by many foreign Powers, had surrounded the Bolsheviks on all sides. Yet the Soviets won. The anti-Bolshevik generals were defeated not so much by the Red Army as by the opposition of the peasants, the workers, and the national minorities. Kolchak lost because the peasants fought against him. Denikin was destroyed by the hostility of the peasants and the national minorities. In almost all cases the countryside detested the whites. And the workers supported the reds whole-heartedly. Otherwise they would never have succeeded. The proletariat is now the mainstay of the Soviet regime. The peasants may grumble against unpopular Muscovite policies, but they realize that the only alternative to bolshevism is landlordism. The ethnic minorities understand that the collapse of the Soviets would again expose them to Great Russian chauvinism.

The Communist Party and the Komsomol could have twenty million members if they opened their doors wide. The Communist Party, however, is conceived as a closely knit, highly disciplined advance guard or shock troop whose strength is not in numbers but in devotion and training. If entrance into Communist ranks were easy, the party would become a band-wagon carrying too many careerists and opportunistic job-holders. This also explains why the salaries of Communists are limited to a low maximum. The relatively low ratio of Bolsheviks to Soviet population is the result of a definite membership policy and not of lack of popular support.

6. That an "independent" Georgia existed in 1918-20 which the Bolsheviks suppressed. There never was an independent Georgia. Menshevik Georgia sold itself to the imperialists in the first week of its existence. The only quality which entitled the Georgian Mensheviks to the name of Socialists was their anti-bolshevism. Indeed, Menshevik Tiflis openly proclaimed that it "preferred the imperialists of the West to the fanatics of the East." It preferred Lloyd George to Lenin.

Georgian Mensheviks operated before the World War. They were members of the Czarist Duma. But they never organized a movement for the separation of Georgia from the empire. Tcheidze and Tzeretelli were leading Mensheviks and influential members of Kerensky's Cabinet in 1917. They never demanded independence for Georgia. As a matter of fact, they supported Kerensky in rejecting Finland's plea for secession. Yet the moment the Bolsheviks came into power the Georgian Mensheviks discovered Georgia's wish to be free from Bolshevik Russia. The Mensheviks had no sooner established a government in Georgia than they invited the Kaiser's troops into their country. Thereafter Menshevik policy reflected the wishes of General Kress von Kressenstein. As soon as the German forces evacuated the country after the World War, the Mensheviks invited the British army into their territory. Menshevik Georgia then did the bidding of London. And when the British retired in 1920, Tiflis negotiated with Kemal Pasha for an alliance against the Bolsheviks.

The Mensheviks persecuted the national minorities in Georgia and burned their villages. They have admitted the imprisonment of hundreds of Communists. They made war on Azerbaijan and Armenia. The Mensheviks aided the whites in their wars against the Bolsheviks. Trotzky wrote: "One can say without exaggeration, Menshevik Georgia created the Wrangel army." He claims that on this ground alone the Bolsheviks would have been justified in overthrowing the Mensheviks. When the Red Army entered Georgia to aid a local Communist insurrection it expelled a government which had never stood on its own legs and which had served as a base for counter-revolutionary and imperialist attacks on Soviet Russia. Ludendorff was Menshevik Georgia's first patron. Then it became Winston Churchill's special pet. And in 1924 Sir Henri Deterding encouraged the Mensheviks to launch an abortive uprising against the Soviets in Georgia.

7. That bolshevism is a religion. John Maynard Keynes; Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, the father of an unborn Pan-Europa; and Professor Henry R. Mussey, writing in *The Nation* of May 4, 1932, have, together with many others, defended the thesis that bolshevism is a religion. If you do not discover the hidden sources of a great movement, just explain that no one can discover them, that they lie in the realm of the metaphysical. Yet the difference between bolshevism and religion is very, very simple. Bolshevism is a science and religion is not. Bolshevism is a set of economic, political, and social principles which inspire faith. Religion is a faith, a belief in things the most fundamental of which are not susceptible of proof. Professor Mussey, following Count Coudenhove-Kalergi, has enumerated similarities between bolshevism and religion. Yet when you examine these closely you see that they are not similarities between the essential characteristics of bolshevism and of

religion, but between the psychological reactions which, according to some people, both bolshevism and religion provoke. What are these alleged similarities? Faith, a body of doctrine, saints, prophets, martyrs, demons or devils (the enemies of bolshevism), a body of priests (Communists who guard the purity of the dogma), reverence for the Scriptures (Karl Marx's "Capital"), the exaltation of Lenin, and, finally, the promise of reward in the Communist hereafter but not, Lenin forbid, in the present.

Now assuming that these parallels exist, it must be remarked that corresponding effects do not necessarily indicate an identity of cause. You can get "sea-sick" on a steamer and on an aeroplane. Yet that does not mean that the Bremen and a Fokker monoplane are the same. I could, however, disprove most of the assumed similarities between bolshevism and religion if space permitted. A Young Communist, for instance, told Professor Mussey that "Russia is no place for anybody who wants things today." From this statement Mr. Mussey concludes that the Bolsheviks postpone reward until the advent of a future Socialist millennium. But the Young Communist was making himself ridiculous. The Bolsheviks urge people to want things today and to go after them. What convinced Komsomol would deny that the reward is already here in the form of social services, new proletarian rights, freedom for those who used to be persecuted, and the like? Then the legend that Lenin is being "deified." If that were so, the same could now be said of Stalin, whose picture can be seen at least as often as Lenin's. It could also be said of Dr. Sun Yat-sen, of George Washington, of Hindenburg, and of kings and princes of former days. Adoration and respect for the mental legacy of a rare genius need not be confused with anthropomorphism.

Woman suffrage evoked tremendous enthusiasm, great faith, violence, and bitterness on the part of its supporters against its opponents. The zeal of the suffragists, of many pacifists, of prohibitionists, of Fascists, and of innumerable nationalists may be reminiscent of religious ardor; yet these movements are obviously not religious. The cynic who may have forgotten a youth enthusiastic in support of some ideal stands baffled in the face of the almost romantic ecstasy, devotion, and readiness to sacrifice manifested by many Bolsheviks. But when one views the subject more naturally one understands why the Bolsheviks condemn those who differ with them. Most men and women who feel deeply about any principle act the same way.

8. That the Bolsheviks are "dumping" goods abroad in order to destroy capitalism. Wrong for two reasons. First, because the Bolsheviks are not dumping goods abroad. So many people have written on this subject and proved that they are not, by a comparison of prices, of wheat crops, and of national participation in world trade, as well as by reference to Russia's low costs when expressed in gold, that I shall not deal with this phase of the question. Secondly, because the Bolsheviks are not foolish enough to suppose that their exports alone can destroy capitalism. The fact that a number of countries have sought to protect themselves against "Soviet dumping" with higher tariff walls and embargoes shows that capitalist nations have sufficient means to shut out Russian exports and thus guard themselves against "destruction." Obviously, the Bolsheviks would not set out to undermine capitalism with a weapon which could so easily be defeated.

Wanted: a Mussolini

By PAUL Y. ANDERSON

Washington, June 25

AS against the sickening torrent of bilge and banality which radio pours into American ears eighteen hours out of every twenty-four, it must be credited with one large if inadvertent achievement: it has been the means finally and completely of debunking the national conventions. No one whose cerebral development exceeds that of a soft-shell crab could possibly listen to the proceedings for ten minutes without being impressed with their trashy and degrading character. The microphone is a sensitive and impartial instrument, and the muttered curses and whispered conspirings of the presiding officers come over the air quite as distinctly as the speeches, if not more so. For example, the day I returned from the Republican convention the caddy master at the golf club made haste to inquire what the chairman meant when he asked the secretary: "Who the hell wrote this goddamned thing?" It is plain that the politicians who manage and manipulate these sordid affairs were guilty of a horrible blunder when they set the precedent of permitting them to be broadcast, and they will doubtless answer for it on that last dreadful day when the troops battle vainly to defend some convention hall against hordes of infuriated Americans armed with axes, pitchforks, and legs wrenched violently from their radio cabinets. To be sure, all Republican conventions are dull, and the recent one set a new record for dreariness, owing in part to the absence of nearly all the Republican Senators. Divested of the gaudy bureaucratic trappings with which they invest themselves in Washington, the Cabinetees, with the exception of Ogden Mills, were revealed as untalented political hacks engaged in the mean scheming of ward politicians. Among such fourth-rate men a Senatorial mediocrity like Hiram Bingham stood out as an intellectual and moral colossus, acclaimed by the galleries and supplicated by beautiful women for his autograph. The delegates were the sort of crowd one would expect to find at a wrestling match, except for being infinitely more bored. On prohibition and the nomination for Vice-President—the only matters in controversy—the will of the majority was ruthlessly overridden by the Administration, and the whole dismal affair ended on the sourest note struck since the Democrats clawed one another to ribbons for three weeks at Madison Square Garden in 1924.*

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WHETHER the Democrats are to repeat the history of that event should be apparent by the time this is printed. On occasions during the last two years they have exhibited a semblance of political acumen, and most of their best men will be on the ground. It is hardly conceivable that they can duplicate Republican cowardice and muddling on the prohibition issue, and the personnel of the Resolutions Committee is a guaranty that the economic planks will

contain something more substantial than the half-hearted boasts and empty vaporings of the Hoover platform. As for the nomination itself, there is no profit in speculating on an event so near. The outcome probably will be determined by the depth and bitterness of the opposition to Roosevelt. At this writing the advantage remains distinctly his. If he is stopped, there are immediate indications that the opposition will turn to Newtie Baker, the beatific soothsayer and spiritual legatee of Woodrow Wilson. In such an event I shudder to contemplate the mental anguish of the power trust, torn between loyalty to its faithful friend in the White House and devotion to its brilliant advocate who is now engaged—for a fee—in trying to destroy the Federal Water Power Act. If Roosevelt is nominated on a platform which gives decent consideration to the economic plague from which the country is perishing and which proposes something more realistic than faith healing and Hoover magic as a cure for unemployment, Norris and other Progressives doubtless will support him. Borah is hotter than if someone had set fire to his shirt-tail, and contrary to popular impression his provocation was less the straddle of the Republicans on prohibition than their pusillanimous evasion of the issues presented by depression. It is always hard to picture him taking the stump against the party nominee, but conditions and his present mood are such that it might occur. A third ticket headed by someone like Norris or Hiram Johnson could count on his immediate and complete support, but that exigency is remote.

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MEANTIME, behind the tinsel and show of the political circuses, certain activities have been in progress which aim at a revolutionary change in the whole national situation. The word "revolutionary" is used advisedly. Recently in this place I mentioned that certain powerful interests were toying with the idea of establishing some kind of economic and political dictatorship. As a matter of fact, two meetings have been held recently to discuss the possibilities. The first occurred in New York at the instigation of Owen D. Young, and was attended by a number of powerful bankers and industrialists. The second, which was a sequel to the first, was staged in Chicago at the elegant Chicago Club, and its sponsors took the surprising precaution of inviting certain representatives of labor and farm organizations for the purpose of sounding them out. Just what the bankers and industrialists think they could do if their furtive control of the government was transformed into open control is difficult to imagine. Nevertheless, they discussed a variety of schemes, the most popular of which seemed to be a "coalition Cabinet" composed of persons like themselves—possibly, although not probably, on the theory that having reduced the country to its present extremity it was their duty to rescue it. In reply they listened to some extremely plain talk by a certain governor who warned them that they were venturing on very dangerous ground. It is typical of such men to ignore good advice, however, and I shall be deeply sur-

* By an inadvertence in his last letter to *The Nation*, printed in the issue of June 22, Mr. Anderson spoke of Dr. Harry Garfield when he intended to refer to Dr. Garfield's brother, James R. Garfield, as the platform writer of the Republicans.—EDITOR THE NATION.

prised if we do not hear more of this business. Consider the problem that faces Mr. Hoover. If the Democrats avoid political suicide at Chicago, and if the campaign proceeds along conventional lines, the President must reasonably expect to be defeated. The obvious strategy in that case will be to see that it is not conducted along conventional lines. Nothing could be more characteristic of the Hoover mind than a proclamation to the general effect that a state of national emergency exists, that partisan politics should be adjourned, that he stands ready in the event of his reelection—or perhaps immediately—to choose a Cabinet consisting of the greatest minds of both parties, and that patriotism demands the immediate abandonment of all campaign activities! It is true that such a step would require more audacity than we should normally expect from the trembling man in the White House, but he may be subjected to powerful pressure from sources which he is not accustomed to resist. Whatever its abuses, the fundamental structure of this government is democratic; hence I always have believed that the first formidable attempt to change it would come from the top of society rather than from the bottom.

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IN any plan which contemplates the suppression or curtailment of democratic processes, the first step inevitably must be to get rid of Congress. Accordingly, every conceivable influence has been exerted in recent weeks to have Congress adjourn immediately. Through the newspapers, over the radio, from banks, chambers of commerce, and the White House, the idea has been persistently propagandized that

the presence of Congress is delaying the “revival of business.” Of course it has only been a few months since the same agencies were busily sowing the idea that a “revival of business” depended on prompt action by Congress, and it will hardly be argued that business has revived sufficiently for Congress to suspend action. Nevertheless, the public has a short memory, and the pressure of organized propaganda for adjournment seems about to succeed. There is even a prospect that having passed the Wagner relief bill it will adjourn without waiting to see whether President Hoover will veto it! Such a course would be utterly inexcusable. It may be argued with some force that in view of all the abuse and misrepresentation to which it has been exposed Congress is justified in throwing up its hands and leaving Hoover and his big-business advisers to stew in their own juice. Unfortunately, however, the rest of the country will be in the soup with them. All Senators and Representatives of demonstrable honesty and good sense admit privately that they should remain here indefinitely and do what they can to ameliorate present conditions and forestall worse ones. But with unemployment increasing, business shrinking, misery spreading, and resentment daily becoming more audible and overt, the so-called leaders of the so-called parties can think of nothing save the approaching election, and the fat leeches in Wall and La Salle streets will think of nothing save holding on to what they have grabbed. Heretofore each major crisis in American history has produced leaders of sufficient intelligence to understand it and ample courage to cope with it. The modern American tragedy is that times which call for men seem to produce only vermin.

The R.O.T.C. as a Peace Society

By ROBERT WOHLFORTH

HAVE you a stake in some phase of our educational system? Would you like the United States Commissioner of Education to sponsor a “careful survey” to prove the utility and importance of your position? Apparently you will be gladly accommodated if you possess an organization with a dignified name and some money and can convince the commissioner that your stake is a “much-discussed question.”

That is what the Research Organization on Military Education did, and Pamphlet No. 28, United States Office of Education, Department of the Interior, Ray Lyman Wilbur, Secretary, is the result. The title of the pamphlet is “A Study of the Educational Value of Military Instruction in Universities and Colleges.” It is based on 16,000 questionnaires mailed to the R. O. T. C. graduates of fifty-four universities and colleges asking them for their opinions on the educational value of military training, whether or not it makes them foes of world peace, and whether they favor compulsory military drill.

The 10,000 replies received were overwhelmingly in favor of compulsory military training, attested its value, and proclaimed that it made friends, not foes, of world peace. Immediately the public was informed by almost all sections of the press that the “survey” was the last word in reply to critics of military education and militarism. A carefully

worded news release from the Research Organization on Military Education prompted this journalistic interpretation. But there is a hidden catch in the “careful survey” that destroys any of its claims of value and impartiality. The survey, upon close examination, reveals itself to be nothing more than a reserve officer asking other reserve officers whether or not military training makes them militarists and haters of peace.

In the first place, the author of Pamphlet No. 28, Ralph Chesney Bishop, is no disinterested and impartial student of military instruction in our educational system. He is a Major in the Reserve Corps, United States Army; an active member of the Reserve Officers' Association, a leading military body for propaganda and lobbying; chairman of its R. O. T. C. committee; and supervisor of the Research Organization on Military Education. It would be inhuman to expect Major Bishop, with these responsibilities, to find other than a favorable report for the military. Surely the Commissioner of Education, Dr. William John Cooper, could hardly have expected anything else.

If Dr. Cooper had made further inquiries he would have learned that Major Bishop and his Research Organization were being financed and directed with a definite partisan end in view. According to the *Army and Navy Register* of February 6, 1932, there is an advisory committee behind

the Research Organization which directs its expenditures. The advisory committee receives its money from the Mershon Fund, disbursed under the supervision of the New York Community Trust for "improving the quality of our citizenship mentally, morally, and physically through the means of universal military training."

This advisory committee of the Research Organization is no more disinterested and impartial on the subject of military training than the author of the government survey. The committee comprises Lieutenant Colonel George C. Marshall, Jr., assistant commandant of the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia; Brigadier General L. R. Gignilliat, superintendent of Culver Military Academy; and Colonel B. Robbins, former Assistant Secretary of War. This high-ranking line-up behind the Research Organization and its *raison d'être* should have convinced Dr. Cooper of its questionable ability to conduct an unbiased survey. Yet Dr. Cooper in his letter of transmittal to Secretary Wilbur states that the purpose of the Research Organization and its backers was to "study the status of military training in the colleges."

It is not surprising that under these partisan auspices the governmental survey was of a biased nature throughout. Dr. Cooper permitted the 16,000 questionnaires to be mailed to R. O. T. C. graduates in various classes from 1920 to 1930 in fifty-four colleges and universities in thirty-nine States. This killed the value of the survey from the start. In the first place, to become an R. O. T. C. graduate a college student must elect to take the military course for four years. The first two years are generally compulsory; the last two are always optional. Obviously, a student who liked the military drill well enough to take four years of it when only two years are required would be biased in its favor.

In the second place, the men receiving the questionnaires graduated from college in the past decade after completing their military study. Since that time many of them have been reserve officers—active military men, attending summer camps every few years, keeping up their military efficiency by means of correspondence-school courses, acting as instructors in the Citizens' Military Training Camps. They have received literature and bulletins on military training from the War Department, the Reserve Officers' Association, the R. O. T. C. Association, the Scabbard and Blade National Military Fraternity, their branch organizations, and other military groups. This group of 16,000 self-elected reserve officers and R. O. T. C. graduates were asked eight questions, and 10,000 of them gave answers that varied only slightly from the military norm. The first question, "Has the R. O. T. C. military course of study a definite educational value of its own?" was already answered by the recipients years ago in college when they elected to take the R. O. T. C. courses. Moreover, there was no opportunity in the questionnaire to compare the military course with any other course; the question permitted only a flat answer. Few reserve officers would admit being duped and state that they spent four long years in study with no result. Furthermore, the question permitted no differentiation between the various parts of the R. O. T. C. courses. No one can say that the R. O. T. C. has no educational value in any of its parts. Yet this question could only be answered yes or no and naturally it got a 97.1 per cent affirmative rating.

The second question, "Did the R. O. T. C. contribute anything important or unique to your education?" is equally obvious. A course so unlike other college courses is certainly unique in respect to other courses. Are not all the military reviews, the parades, the sham battles, the co-ed honorary colonels and "sponsors" of the R. O. T. C. unique? Moreover, the graduates questioned should have received commissions as second lieutenants in the Reserve Corps upon graduation. If that did not make the course important to them, it surely must have made it unique. The answers were 94.9 per cent affirmative.

The third question was, "How did the quality of the R. O. T. C. courses compare with other courses at your institution?" Here is the first real basis for comparison in the questionnaire and here is also the first deviation in the answers, with a much lower estimate of the R. O. T. C. training. The basic two-year course gets a general rating below average.

Question four, "From your own experience was the time spent on the training justified by the results obtained?" is another answered question. The result of the course is to produce a reserve commission. If the reserve officer answers no to this question he damns his profession; he surely would not admit that he took the R. O. T. C. course for the pay, the uniform, the summer camps, or to stand in well with a pretty co-ed honorary colonel.

Question seven is the heart of the "careful survey." "Does the R. O. T. C. course of instruction tend to produce a militaristic attitude inimical to world peace?" The *San Francisco News* said of this question: "Mr. Bishop might as well have polled army officers to find out whether they are for or against disarmament, or members of the college fraternities to find out whether they are for or against fraternities." But the 93.6 per cent of the R. O. T. C. graduates who answered question seven negatively were the basis for the main conclusion of the "careful survey"—that the R. O. T. C. does not make militarists. The press, aided by the news release from the Research Organization, paid more attention to this question than to any other, the *New York Times* heralding the study in these headlines: "Say Military Study Is No Foe to Peace. Replies in R. O. T. C. Survey Show 93.6 Per Cent Were Not Affected."

This is the manner in which the survey has been accepted by the public and by practically all of the press. Few have bothered to reflect that no officer, no R. O. T. C. graduate would admit that his training made him a foe of peace. If there is one thing an army man likes to profess, it is his affection for peace and his distaste of war.

If the Major should poll *all* graduates, not merely those who elected to try for reserve commissions through the R. O. T. C., with the question whether or not to abolish military training, he would not get the answers shown in his "careful survey." Only recently, for instance, the Inter-collegiate Disarmament Council, the Convention of the Student Volunteer Movement, and the National Student Federation—in all comprising about 70,000 students polled—voted down compulsory drill. Last year over 10,000 college students petitioned Congress to discontinue financial support of compulsory drill courses—the R. O. T. C.—in their institutions. Within the past few months 327 leading educators have requested Congress to take military training out of our colleges and universities.

“What Is Left of Goethe?”

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: A varied fate has pursued Goethe in Anglo-Saxon criticism. One hundred years ago Carlyle hailed Goethe as a heroic personality whose study inspired self-confidence and courage. Emerson, reacting against a cramped Calvinism, was attracted to Goethe's catholic interests and acceptance of experience (“he was not afraid to live”), yet retained enough of his own Puritan background to condemn Goethe as worldly and realistic. Eighty years later George Santayana, steeped in Greek naturalism, pronounced Goethe wilful and romantic, although in a sense “the wisest of mankind.” This year saw the publication of H. W. Nevinson's book, wherein Goethe appears acceptable by being pictured as an affable, urbane, and smooth gentleman.

In his article *What Is Left of Goethe?* (*The Nation*, June 15, 1932), Clifton Fadiman approaches the problem primarily from a sociological angle and finds that Goethe's wisdom is not relevant to our social dilemmas. Ours is a revolutionary epoch and Goethe thought statically, conservatively, and at times as a reactionary. He points to the fact that Goethe spent the greater part of his life as an official in a feudal regime, that he was not sympathetic to the French Revolution, that his chief objective was to create the possibility of self-culture.

A critical survey of Goethe's social life does lend some support to this account. Yet the point can be overstated. We know now—as a result, alas, of academic research—that Goethe was not at all satisfied with the suppressive practices in the duchy and more than once made earnest attempts to restrain the duke from his wild extravagances; that he made a number of efforts to introduce reforms at the risk of disfavor with the court and estrangement from the duke. It is well known that his precipitate flight to Italy was partly induced by the oppressiveness of the social atmosphere in a feudal regime and that he only returned upon the duke's promise that he should be relieved of his major official duties. Goethe frequently expressed concern for the sufferings of the lower classes. From Apolda, where he found misery among the weavers, he wrote: “I can't compose anything here. My Thoas must speak as though no weaver were hungry.” On another occasion: “Misery is becoming to me as commonplace as my hearthstone. But I never quit hold of my ideas and I struggle with the unknown angel, though my thigh shrink from it.” Nor is “Hermann und Dorothea” a flat rejection of the French Revolution; the fifth song clearly enunciates the value and necessity of change, and the poem as a whole indicates the polar interdependence of stability and revolution.

But a larger and more fundamental question is involved in a thoroughgoing condemnation of Goethe on the ground of his social unprogressiveness. Is it fair to judge Goethe exclusively or primarily by his political theories? Goethe was a poet and dramatist, perhaps a natural scientist and philosopher—he certainly was not a political economist. To apply a standard which falls altogether outside of our subject matter is to disregard that which constitutes its unique character. Is it just to dismiss a man on the basis of what is but peripheral in his contribution?

The reply may be offered that Goethe's *general* classic temper makes for a conservatism which, translated into political theory, is unacceptable to us today. It is admittedly true that classicism is anti-revolutionary, has tended toward harmonization usually in metaphysical, religious, and aesthetic terms. But is Goethe a classicist in this sense? Some popular treatises have spread the conception of the “Olympian” Goethe. Is it borne out by the facts? There is the storm-and-stress period. It is

true that Götz and Werther are not revolutionaries in the modern sense, that the freedom they seek is not economic freedom for the masses but liberty for the exceptional individual. Yet the spirit of these works is the spirit of revolutionary rebellion against a cramping status quo. This storm-and-stress emphasis on rebellion never left Goethe even in the halcyon days of his classicism.

The misconception of the nature of Goethe's classicism carries with it the corollary of Goethe as the serene optimist. Mr. Fadiman believes that Goethe's optimism is akin to “the muscular inspirationalism of Edgar Guest, Bruce Barton, and other professional barbarians.” To speak of Goethe in terms of calm contentment reveals a questionable acquaintance with his life and work. Goethe did not only renounce “one young woman after another”; he renounced his storm-and-stress titanism; he suffered deep disappointments in Weimar (later embodied in “Tasso”); he renounced the dear illusion of his ability as a painter. Every one of his major works from “Tasso” and “Iphigenie” to “Wilhelm Meister” and “Faust” preaches the lesson of renunciation. It is, to be sure, not the renunciation of the Middle Ages, but the classic renunciation of what lies beyond our nature. Yet in Goethe's temper it was necessarily accompanied by sadness and bitterness. Add to these the crying grief of the “Elegy” ((Marienbad), the statement of the elder Goethe that in all of his life he had not had more than four weeks of happiness, and we have a picture of a man that is hard to reconcile with the portrait of the complacent, untragic type.

The current sociological approach in literary criticism can only be acclaimed as a healthy reaction to the traditional empty appreciations in terms of aesthetic “forms” or general “deep insights.” But there is a danger if the social criterion is used exclusively. In terms of it alone, what is “left” of Plato and Aristotle, who sanctioned slavery, of St. Thomas and Spinoza, who taught “acceptance,” of Lucretius and Shakespeare, of Kant and Schopenhauer? What is “left” of the scientists, men of letters, and artists who were either politically conservative or not political-minded? Moreover, the social problem, vital as it is, does not constitute even today the sole problem. Throughout all social changes there exist issues which are largely independent of social conditions, issues suggested by such phenomena as chance, individual frustration, and death. To be sure, today these eternal problems ought to recede before the temporal exigencies, and we are quite justified in condemning our contemporary classicists. Historic personalities, however, cannot be judged in the same terms. Their social situation was different. Their significance must be gauged symbolically and from the manner in which they treated the problems which appeared most crucial in their particular intellectual milieu. Even Karl Marx's teachings have been receiving this historic and symbolic interpretation. There is otherwise the danger that the here and now be identified with what obtains universally and eternally. The higher task of even a contemporary critic, when he approaches historic phenomena, would seem to consist in doing justice to both categories.

It is still to Goethe's credit that at a time when literary aestheticism held sway and political reaction was in the saddle, he steered clear of romantic escapes and urged the wholesome maxim: “What is your duty? The demands of the day!” It was an attitude far in advance for the literati of Goethe's Germany; it has become the motto in our own day of men like Thomas Mann in their struggle against the aesthetic individualism and flight of many of our contemporary poets and thinkers.

Brooklyn College, June 22

HARRY SLOCHOWER

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: In contradiction to Clifton Fadiman, it seems to me that very much is left of Goethe—so much that it cannot possibly be dealt with in a few lines. Goethe was not a revolutionist but an aristocrat with very conservative views on fixed classes. This doubtless is correct, but it need not mean that Goethe cannot have anything to say to a revolutionary modern age. If we read Goethe today, we do so not in order to find good recipes for building up a new social and economic order, but for the sake of the purely human and artistic values that his writings contain. Those human values stand for good in a communistic society in just the same way as in a monarchistic class state, and you find them everywhere in Goethe, in "Faust" as well as in any little lyric poem.

That famous saying, "Redemption is for those who strive" ("Wer immer strebend sich bemüht, den können wir erlösen"), gives no specified program as to what to strive for. But this does not make it meaningless; it merely lifts it above the differences of country and period. Anybody who is striving for perfection, anybody who earnestly endeavors to approach the goal he has set for himself, can be redeemed.

"Der Zweck des Lebens ist das Leben selbst," so thoroughly misunderstood by Mr. Fadiman, would make a perfect slogan for a socialistic society. What does the new social order want to achieve by trying to abolish economic miseries if not to give all men the possibility of building up a happy and rich and full life? And who was a better *Lebenskünstler* than Goethe?

Today's uprooted generation needs strong, firm, and wise personalities. That is why Goethe can mean so much to us.

Bayside, N. Y., June 15

MARGARET PLAUT

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: I quote Mr. Fadiman from *The Nation* for June 8: "Perhaps within a few years Mr. Hale himself will see that the author of 'Faust,' while eminently successful at providing mental food for four generations of schoolmasters, offers contemporary men little more than a diet of wind."

Now, few schoolmasters are able to perpetuate art; in fact most of them kill it on the spot. But I have heard them speak lovingly of the "socio-economic" theories which are the fashionable essentials of today. The contemplative faculties are falling into discredit, while the microscope, the chart, and the social formula are in the ascendancy. An apostle of culture such as Goethe is naturally suspect.

Veneration for the great is not characteristic of our time, a journalistic era, reveling in biography to glean from heroes' lives the facts common to all—not the spirit cultivated by few. Masterpieces are studied for their frailties. A race of critics develops—clever men, but impotent. Yes, the critics seem to be the final purpose of art.

San Francisco, June 7

ERNST BACON

TO THE EDITOR OF THE NATION:

SIR: We should like to know on what heroic food Mr. Fadiman has grown so great that Goethe's wisdom is as a "diet of wind" to him? Mr. Fadiman takes Goethe to task because he is not a social reformer, because he is not primarily interested in external and social phenomena, because, as a true artist, he is mainly concerned with his inner life—"developing himself incessantly and unsparingly."

Mr. Fadiman is irritated by Goethe's serenity and moderation, though he confesses in a previous paragraph, perhaps with unwilling truth, that Goethe's "personality is superficially irritating." May we suggest that Goethe's Olympian aloofness and serenity are irritating because in their unattainableness they are a reproach to our revolt and confusion?

L. G. MACFARLAND AND FRIENDS

Crystal Beach, Ontario, June 15

In the Driftway

IN a world nourished on symbols no symbol has more faithfully preserved its force through the centuries than has gold. Other metals have been more precious, judged by their money value; other materials have been more rare, more hardly got, far more useful to mankind. But among civilized nations and some not so civilized, none but gold has been so persistently cherished, none has retained so firmly its irresistibly romantic associations. Thus when we read that the sailors on the Italian salvage ship *Artiglio*, engaged in rescuing from the deep the gold ingots sunk ten years ago in the steamship *Egypt*, were moved to hysterical tears and laughter when the first gold bars were landed on the *Artiglio's* deck, we can easily understand their emotion. This was buried treasure indeed, buried 400 feet under water in layers of slime. Years and much money have been spent in the work of rescue. The Indian rupee notes that made up part of the *Egypt's* millions are a sodden mass of mud; the gold remains tangible and secure, yellow after half a score of years.

* * * * *

SOMETHING of this worshipful attitude toward gold was evidenced a year ago when the newspapers carried streamer headlines that England was about to go off the gold standard. Something of it can be distinguished now in the horror that is felt when it is suggested that the United States might conceivably be forced to follow suit. The idea of the gold standard in international currency is far more potent, among the masses who understand nothing of world finance, than if gold were a mere monetary unit and nothing more. Gold is the ultimate symbol of wealth, of comfort, even of peace. Gold pieces, not the sound paper money of a great Power, are what the miser lovingly runs through his fingers; gold is what men bury in stout oak chests, for other men to search for through deserts, in deep forests, and under the sea. The kings in the ancient sagas sat on golden thrones; the streets of heaven are paved with gold and pearl; King Arthur's sword, of finest steel, had a handle of a more precious metal; and the princess in the fairy tale could not exist without golden hair.

* * * * *

WHEN the Drifter reads of the stern practicalities of the new Communist states, he wonders what will become of the power of gold. For obviously gold has no utilitarian value that is not bettered by other metals. And it would be hard coldly and dispassionately to defend its unique beauty to a people that saw other beauty in soaring steel and massive concrete. Gold is too soft to be used in machinery, it will not burn, it does not float; you cannot eat gold, you need not wear gold, you would be uncomfortable sitting or sleeping on gold, and gold dishes to eat from are considerably less than practical. If one of his ardent Communist friends should ask the Drifter what gold was good for, he could only point to legend, to the history of mankind. Nevertheless, it would be interesting to see what would happen if gold should suddenly be discovered in the neighborhood of Omsk or Nijni-Novgorod. Would there

be a rush to stake a claim, as there was in California nearly a century ago? Or have the new wonders of the machine age in Soviet Russia displaced permanently the golden dreams by which men for so many centuries have been consoled?

THE DRIFTER



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Finance

Taxes That Hit Everybody

THE new taxes on commodities and services, most of which went into effect on June 21, fall into two general classes, one including those levies which will certainly be borne by the consumer, the other those of which the incidence is in doubt. In the first class are the taxes on theater admissions, telephone and telegraph messages, stock and bond transfers, electricity, and bank checks. Inelastic price structures in this group prevent an advance in the price, in which the tax could be disguised; instead, the levy will be openly added to the price as a constant reminder to the consumer that he is paying the bill, but equally as a guaranty that he is paying no more than the actual amount levied. In its original form the tax on electricity was to be borne by the generating companies, but in a last-minute change of heart the Senate shifted the load to the commercial and domestic consumer. The industrial user was exempted, apparently on the theory that a factory employing power in manufacturing goods is more truly a "producer" than the corner grocery store lit by electricity. If we are already suffering from overproduction and underconsumption, as most people seem to believe, a good deal could be said for discouraging the further making of goods and for clearing the retail channels of distribution; but this phase of the matter did not appeal to the lawmakers.

Already some of these taxes are causing concern to the companies which, nominally, do not pay them. The motion-picture industry, terribly reduced from its glamorous condition of a few years ago and threatened with a number of receiverships, is wondering how many of its patrons who formerly managed to pay 50 cents for a ticket will consent to pay 55 cents. Dealings on the Stock Exchange, which now carry a tax load of \$8 or \$9 a hundred shares, have fallen to a low ebb, and short sales, already rendered difficult by numerous rules and restrictions, are further handicapped by the fact that the federal tax must be paid twice, originally by the short seller and again every time the lender of stocks recalls his loan, even if this occurs every day. The United States Post Office has already issued a warning that private mail-carrying organizations, formed to avoid the new three-cent letter rate, are illegal.

The other class of taxes referred to above, applying to the manufacturer of commodities, will fall wherever the exigencies of the market dictate. Gasoline prices have been advanced in a number of localities to offset the tax, but with rising supplies of crude oil and prospective reduction in the use of gasoline, which the Standard Oil Company of New York estimates will amount to from 6 to 15 per cent during the remainder of the year, there obviously is no firm basis for shifting the tax to the owners of cars and trucks.

So with automobiles and tires. Manufacturers of tires made strenuous efforts to get rid of their stocks in time to avoid the tax, and in doing so loaded their dealers with supplies which are likely to last for months. Only, apparently, when these goods are finally in the hands of users will the question of who pays the tax become acute. The tire companies, notoriously at odds among themselves and dominated as to price by the powerful mail-order houses, are in no position to be high-handed when that time arrives; but sheer necessity may force an advance in prices or lowering of quality. This whole tax episode, coming at a time when corporate profits and general purchasing power are at the lowest levels in years, can hardly fail to result in a further curtailment of both.

S. PALMER HARMAN

Books and Films

Prelude

By CONRAD AIKEN

True inwardness—what! is there such a phrase?—
is the truth inward, and not outward—is the oak tree
false in the bark, false in the leaf or mast,
true only in the root? and you, poor biped,
who rise in the morning to walk and talk—

are the shoes that await you by the bedroom chair
less true than dreams from which you wake, the hat
that hangs in the hall less true than memory
which remembers it, reaches a hand to it—
the door less true than the hand that shuts it?

Move outward, and you only move, poor biped,
an atom's atom from here to here, never
from here to there—again your "self" you meet,
it is yourself that waits outside the door,
salutes you on the waking side of dream—

hands you your coat, your collar, the new necktie,
directs your appetite, chooses an egg,
says, as you read the morning paper, act

or do not act, reflect, do not reflect,
love viciously, love wisely, love not at all—

this is "you," this headline in the news,
the news is "you," is old already, undiscovered
is "you" too, long discovered. Greet your face—
dispersed in some such terms, phrased, rephrased;
speak to the uttermost star, which is yourself.

Are these less "you" than the decayed molar?
the lost appendix? the leaky heart? the mind
too much absorbed in daily bread of sex?
Learn the true outwardness of inner truth!
time will at last bring both at once to end.

For at one stroke—no matter whence it come—
lightning or ice or blood—inward and outward
will singularly cease, and be the same.

Then history will give to both a name;
And so at last those things so bravely done
will be at peace with what was merely known.

The Meaning of Individualism

By HENRY HAZLITT

FROM the author of "The Meaning of a Liberal Education" and "Liberty" this book* is disappointing. The problem which the title suggests is perhaps the crucial social problem of our time, but Mr. Martin throws little fresh light upon it. There is at present an astonishingly widespread confusion of thought which has led an increasing number of writers to denounce "individualism" in general without giving us any clear idea of what they mean by the term, and without having any themselves; and Mr. Martin had an excellent opportunity to point to some of the absurdities in this position and to bring clarity to the subject. He has, indeed, pointed to some of the absurdities, and he has said some things very well, but unfortunately he has overstated his case. Most of the present volume is an able but old-fashioned plea for "the individual" against "the mass"; often it gives us oratory where it should give us analysis, and at moments it seems suspiciously like a mere apology for class exploitation.

"Individualism" is usually represented, both by its champions and by its enemies, as a very simple doctrine, when in reality it is a word covering several distinct and often complex doctrines. We may distinguish at least three main meanings:

1. Most frequently in America today both defenders and opponents mean by it a certain *economic* theory and practice, but even here it may have several meanings. It may sometimes mean the profit system or capitalism as opposed to socialism or communism; it may sometimes mean the prevalence of "the little fellow," the small entrepreneur, as opposed to the chain stores or the great corporations; it may sometimes mean the right to unrestricted profits, or the open shop, or opposition to unemployment insurance. In general it means economic *laissez*

faire, but *laissez faire* in the interests of the capitalist class, not of the working class. Therefore the word has become a catchword in the mouths of reactionaries and an epithet in the mouths of liberals, Socialists, and Communists. It has, in short, ceased to be a word of very precise reference and has become a sort of emotive signal.

2. "Individualism" is also the belief that the interests of "the individual" are opposed to those of "society," and that all conflicts must, where possible, be resolved in favor of the individual. Allied with this is the belief that the genius or the great man is "born," not "made," and that he would have emerged as the same kind of genius or great man in practically any society. Both of these notions are profoundly mistaken. "The individual" and "society" are not different things, but merely two ways of regarding the same thing; and the individual is not an isolated monad, but a social product. His ideals and interests, his very language and logic, everything, in fact, that enables him to think at all, is socially given him. Individuality itself is a social product; it is not found in primitive societies and does not emerge until a late stage historically. One might even date it, indeed, from the pharaoh Ikhnaton.

3. Individualism may mean, finally, an emphasis on the social value of individuality, on the fostering of the greatest possible variety among human beings, on the recognition of superiority, on the need for encouraging independence of thought, and freedom from the passions, credulities, and superstitions of the mob.

It is for individualism in this third sense that the case is strongest. It is for individualism in this third sense that Mr. Martin mainly pleads, and in its defense he has many vigorous and admirable things to say. He tries to show how this achievement of individuality comes in conflict, first, with the industrial

* "The Conflict of the Individual and the Mass in the Modern World." By Everett Dean Martin. Henry Holt and Company. \$2.

organization of the modern world and its standardized mass appeals; second, with the accidents of American history; and, third, with the psychology of the crowd itself. His historical analysis of American traditions is very illuminating, his indictment of our public-school education as a mere instrument for perpetuating crowd-mindedness is impressive, and I cannot resist quoting his eloquent passage on advertising:

Propaganda is not education; it strives for the closed mind rather than for the open mind. It is not concerned with the development of mature individuals. Its aim is immediate action. . . . Advertising and propaganda at best tell only one side of the story; they are hostile to a spirit of disinterested investigation; they substitute slogans for critical ideas. They discourage the suspension of judgment, and make for intolerance and insincerity. It is impossible to understand the mind of the American public without taking into account the tremendous psychological effect of bringing up a generation of people in a daily environment of advertising.

It is doubly unfortunate, therefore, that Mr. Martin has weakened the effect of his book by failing adequately to define his aim. There are too many dubious identifications. Mr. Martin attacks "democracy," but it is not always clear whether he means by it the theory and practice of egalitarianism or a certain form of political organization—and if he means the latter, he does not tell us precisely what form of political organization he would prefer instead. He does, indeed, say at one point: "We deplore the basis in slavery of this [pre-Civil War American Southern] culture, but then there is undoubtedly something to be said for the resulting leadership of the educated over the mass. One such result is civilized decency." Does Mr. Martin mean that economic and physical exploitation of the mass is necessary for recognition of intellectual superiority and leadership? And if so, does he recommend our paying that price? He tends also to identify democracy with communism—"The philosophy of communism is in many respects the logical and consistent goal of democracy"—and there is apparently a further identification of egalitarianism, communism, and materialism—"We forget that what the proletariat wants primarily is to get rich." In his attacks on economic reform he even falls back upon sheer mysticism: "What if the lot of man in the earth is harder, inevitably more 'unjust,' *wickeder*, than we moderns have ever dared to admit? What if there is an inevitable 'curse,' call it what you please from the modern point of view, that lurks in the very heart of human existence, and must show its results in this or any civilization?" He remarks later that "it is very probable that there is a definite limitation to such an increase in average wealth and that we may even now have reached that limit"; but he gives us no reasons for this belief any fresher or more convincing than those put forward by Malthus.

His illustrations also are unfortunate. He attempts to prove that great men were alive in the world in the Victorian Age, but hardly today. "Among English writers," he asks, "how does H. G. Wells stand in the shoes of Thackeray?" But might he not more fairly have substituted either Bernard Shaw or Joyce for Wells? (Or is he scoring a technical point by omitting Irishmen?) "It is hardly likely," he goes so far as to say at one point, "that we shall have another Roosevelt or Wilson; the public is weary of such personalities in politics." Apparently his only ground for this conclusion is that we are now in the days of the Coolidges and Hoovers. Wouldn't he have felt the same way if he had lived in the days of Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur? Or in those of Fillmore, Pierce, and Buchanan?

Such needless generalizations are deplorable because they weaken the force of the genuinely important things that Mr. Martin has to say. Had he been more careful to distinguish,

for the reader and in his own mind, the various doctrines that come under the name of individualism, he could have rendered an important service in helping to rescue individualism—in the sense of independence of mind, rich and deep individuality—from the disrepute it has fallen into through confusion with individualism in its various other meanings. Critics who have recently been converted to sympathy with communism, for example, have written in effect that the great bane of American literature has been "individualism," and have cited as its victims Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Melville, Poe, and Whitman! What they mean by individualism appears sometimes to be insufficient recognition of the value of traditional culture, sometimes the doctrine of self-reliance, sometimes the desire for solitude and the mere lack of personal affability and warmth, and sometimes the failure to be a Communist. What they appear to recommend is a sort of mystic self-identification of the writer—even if he happens to be middle class, as most of our writers are—with "the proletariat." To estimate the probable effects of such pseudo-proletarianism would carry us too far afield. Let us at least keep in mind, however, that whatever an individual writer has to say in common with everybody else will be interesting only to the sociologist or the professional literary historian, and then only for its typicality. It is all very well to say in our time, as we so often do, that a writer like Dante, for example, is important to us because he "epitomizes the Middle Ages," or Voltaire because he "represents" the eighteenth century. The belief that great writers are "typical" of their times is largely the illusion of later ages—an illusion which arises partly because our conception of that age is formed from those very writers. Even the greatest writer, of course, is certain in some way to reflect his age; that is not an achievement, it is rather something that he cannot escape; but to his contemporaries he is important because he gives to certain ideas or ideals, whether they are prevalent or rare in their own day, a richer, more profound, or more original expression than anyone else has given them. The great writer survives, in brief, only because he is great as an individual.

American Humor

Tobacco Road. By Erskine Caldwell. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

ALL the events in "Tobacco Road," Erskine Caldwell's first novel since "The Bastard," pass in a monotone through Georgia seasons, through hunger and shiftlessness, through death and marriage. No one event receives more emphasis than another: Bessie, the woman preacher, is "ganged" in a cheap hotel, the grandmother is run over, the Ford is bashed in, a Negro is killed, but the sentences have no bumps to show that the story has been jolted out of its slow pace. Caldwell's method is completely identified with the casual happenings to his characters, who seem thereby to acquire some of the comic properties intrinsic in chickens. The notion has gone about that the deliquescent characters, their squalor, their utter placidity, make Caldwell's writing "primitive"; his sentence structure has made possible the belief that his work is naive; and because the setting is rural and the humors supposedly exaggerated, he is said to resemble Mark Twain and Bret Harte. These false notions have completely obscured what is an original, mature approach to the incongruities existing in a people who ignore the civilization that contains them as completely as the civilization ignores them.

By the simple construction of his sentences, by the fact that he deals usually with isolated rural people who come into contact with other ways of American life only at its more amusing points, and by giving only an external account of events,

Caldwell is able to build a series of comic meanings about events—hunger, death, property—which have a totally different significance for the reader. The comic meanings are never explicit in his work; the author leaves it to the reader to call them up for himself; and his stories and novels take on an immediate kind of humor and, occasionally, a kind of pathos which is far from sentimentality. On the surface the method is like Hemingway's; but Hemingway makes it known that one thing matters more than another, if nowhere else than in the dialogues which indicate that there is more than can be said in words. Caldwell makes no such concession; everything is told baldly; the event is all. The reader gets the effect he pleases, but he will be pleased to get a bracing kind of humor. It is probable that Caldwell could not obtain any high emotional response to his characters by this method, which, fortunately, and unlike Hemingway, he does not force on to every and any kind of material he is interested in. When, however, in the last paragraph of the book he tries to be ironic, to suggest just how the reader should take the last stretch, he falls into cheap sentimentality notably absent from his characters' pronouncements anywhere else in the novel. There is nothing sentimental, for example, about Jeeter's lyrical speeches of complaint, for everything is complained about. The error of the last words of the book is the error of dropping the comic method to point a moral.

KENNETH WHITE

Voices in the Wilderness

The American Jitters. By Edmund Wilson. Charles Scribner's Sons. \$2.50.

Toward Soviet America. By William Z. Foster. Coward-McCann. \$2.50.

MR. WILSON'S book, as he himself says, is made up chiefly of "straight reporting" of various events and conditions in this country between the autumns of 1930 and 1931. It is good reporting, pictorial and free from smart cynicism though not movingly dramatic. It would hardly be worth reproducing between covers except for the final chapters on *The Best People* and *The Case of the Author*. Here Mr. Wilson analyzes and editorializes devastatingly on what has gone before. In general he sees the predictions of Karl Marx coming true in the United States. "Capitalism has run its course, and we shall have to look for other ideals than the ones that capitalism has encouraged." Then he confesses, "I don't know where they are coming from."

Mr. Foster thinks he can tell him. The best of "*Toward Soviet America*" as of "*The American Jitters*" is at the end. The early chapters are the orthodox Marxian gospel, in the application of which to recent economic history in America Mr. Foster is not always quite fair or strictly accurate. Nor would he probably resent having this said. Communists have a habit of fixing their eyes on the target, regarding with indifference, not to say contempt, the ammunition used. But the concluding chapters on *The Revolutionary Way Out of the Crisis* and *The United Soviet States of America* give a brief, frank, and understandable exposition of the program of the Communist Party in America which has long been needed.

To those who maintain that the socialization of Russia was practicable because of the primitive character of industry there, but that our highly developed system would present vast difficulties, Mr. Foster replies that on the contrary the transformation would be quicker and easier here than in a country where it has been necessary to build up plant and organization. He is less convincing when he writes: "The real measure of a revolutionary situation in any given country is the strength of the Communist Party" (in the United States 15,000). Many

Communists hold that what counts is not the size of the party but the number of persons who in a crisis would be sufficiently in sympathy with communism to support it. Certainly that is the heart of the situation, and at the same time its most elusive aspect.

Mr. Wilson is not optimistic. Mr. Foster, of course, is. The Communists have this great advantage, that they are the only group in America today with perfect assurance in their economic theories and unbounded enthusiasm to put them into effect. Mr. Wilson looks at the "best people"—and gives them up. But he thinks perhaps a new generation of radicals is rising in the ranks of labor upon whom some reliance can be placed. There is a deal of significance in his statement that we have not merely lost our way in the economic jungle but have lost "our conviction of the value of what we were doing." Emphatically man cannot live by bread alone. (Try and get even that now, some reader interjects scornfully.) Especially is this true of practical, idealistic Americans. They must have their beliefs and their enthusiasms. The old-time religion of money-making is played out. Some substitute is inevitable.

Mr. Wilson's book is to be commended to two classes: to those timid souls who concede that modern industrialism has broken down but think that, while preserving the profits system, a little tinkering will set the machine going again, and to the cheer-up school of talkers who proclaim that the cure for a cock-eyed world is a pair of rose-colored glasses. Mr. Foster's book should be required reading for every person invited to make a chamber-of-commerce speech or nominated for any public office above that of dog-catcher. Also it is to be commended to all those who know in advance that it is not so, even if they finish it without a belief changed—as probably they will. For it must be said that the volume is a better exposition of the program of the Communist Party of America than it is a persuasive argument that economic change will or should come by grace of that group. Mr. Foster says that just as capitalist industry developed in the world a hundred years ago along the lines established in England, so communism will come elsewhere as it came in Russia. But even if the premise of the proposition were truer than it is, the conclusion would not be inevitable.

We like to say that history teaches this and that, but does it teach anything of value in a crisis, unless it is that great changes come unexpectedly and accomplish what all the best minds know to be impossible? Nobody can more than vaguely guess what is in the hearts of the American people today—much less what may be there tomorrow if conditions continue to go from bad to worse. But if there is a halfway safe prediction, it is that an upheaval in this country will not arise under the direction of any existing political group, nor be controllable by it.

ARTHUR WARNER

Shorter Notices

God's Gentleman. By Garry August. Alfred A. Knopf. \$2.50.

The author of this story of a young rabbi in a Midwestern community is himself of the rabbinate, so it may be presumed he knows whereof he writes. Indeed, one cannot doubt that a young man of normal decency like his Daniel Sharwell, officiating in a smug community in the fat years before the slump, would have a hard-enough time carrying to his congregation a message of spiritual dignity and integrity. Nor can one doubt that such a congregation must have been quite as dreadful as the author says. One may, however, question the supposed idealism of the young rabbi, with his swelling bank account and his bonds and his glad rags and his canned culture. Perhaps this is even the intention the author wished to convey, although

he never says so explicitly. Young Rabbi Sharwell did not have to succumb to Babbitt; he had merely to give in to himself. Mr. August's style on the whole is merely competent, and at times considerably less than that.

I Cover the Waterfront. By Max Miller. E. P. Dutton and Company. \$2.50.

Publishers often advertise books as "different." Generally they are not. As a rule a book falls—and the publisher wants it to fall—in one of several fixed classes. Mr. Miller's does not. Out of his work for the San Diego (California) *Sun* he has written a volume of brief sketches, partly narrative, partly philosophical, of a sort well known in Europe but little done in this country in recent years. Without artifice or pretentiousness, Mr. Miller's book shows fresh observation and an original turn of thought that make it worthy to have and to hold.

Dictator. By George Slocombe. Houghton Mifflin Company. \$2.50.

Mr. Slocombe, who is a veteran foreign correspondent for an English newspaper, has written a very agreeable romance about the life of an imaginary contemporary dictator. Hannibal, a son of the people, a despiser of liberalism and democracy, returns from exile to his native Thalia as the man of destiny. He is obeyed, feared, and hated by both the aristocrats and the liberals, and is overthrown by a cabal of his enemies when, in a moment of weakness, he falls in love with the king's daughter. It is only after years of exile and after immersing himself in the class struggle on the side of the proletariat that he gets his chance to come back, this time, presumably, to wipe the slate clean of all remnants of the established order.

China. By Marc Chadourne. Translated from the French by Harry Block. Illustrated by Covarrubias. Covici-Friede. \$3.

Covarrubias was the perfect illustrator for this book. In all his drawings he reduces his human beings to animal, sometimes to skeletal, terms. Similarly, M. Chadourne gives us the Chinese as animals, pictured with irony and repugnance. His French orderliness shudders at the vast disorder of China, and makes no effort to understand it except by way of glittering paradoxes, which, indeed, complete their circles but contain nothing. The writing is witty and vivacious; it is almost always good entertainment; but the illumination it offers is about as valuable as that of a handful of firecrackers on a dark night.

The Way of the Lancer. By Richard Boleslavski. In Collaboration with Helen Woodward. The Bobbs-Merrill Company. \$3.

This is not one of the Literary Guild's good choices. Mr. Boleslavski, once an officer in a regiment of Polish lancers serving with the Russian army, and now a stage director in America, has had amazing and terrible adventures. He has many good stories to tell; but whether by his fault or his collaborator's, they are told melodramatically. The book is full of bad "fine" writing. It is readable, but one leaves it with the feeling that good material has gone to waste.

George Moore. By Humbert Wolfe. Oxford University Press. \$1.50.

The first twenty-odd pages of this little book contain some of the most irritating, dandified, epigonous prose I have run across in a long time. Mr. Wolfe, however, drops the manner as soon as he gets into his matter, and turns out a sound, well-finished, and sensitive study of Moore as seen in his life and in his books. Often Mr. Wolfe's style falls into the cadences and methods of George Moore, which is an advantage, for Moore's style, even in Mr. Wolfe's imitation, is superior to his own.

Films

Morals, Facts, and Fiction

A CHINESE mandarin may be an extremely cultured person. He will compose poems of superb refinement and keen delicacy of perception describing the beauty of a rose or a sunset, dilating on the pangs of love, or philosophizing on the vanity of life. He will show a connoisseur's appreciation of fine painting and will surround himself with exquisite furniture and porcelain. But he will not think twice before ordering the head chopped off of some poor beggar who has been found guilty of breaking the law. The pleasure-loving Romans who wrote poetry, copied Greek sculpture, and studied Greek philosophy were equally free from the Christian scruples about the taking of human life, and enjoyed nothing better than the spectacle of gladiators fighting one another to the death. Today we call this sort of thing barbarism and cruelty, but is it? Perhaps the difference lies only in the greater concern that our civilization shows for the individual, a concern which past civilizations did not share, and which future civilizations may not share either.

All these profound meditations, however, are merely a pre-amble to the statement that death fights between wild animals, of which fights there are a goodly number in "Bring 'em Back Alive" (Mayfair), are a fascinating sight, our enjoyment of which remains completely untainted by any feeling of sadistic lust. The day may or may not come when we shall set as much store by the life of an animal as we do by the life of a human being. But for the present, so far as animals are concerned, we still share the general attitude of the Chinese and the ancient Romans: their life simply does not count. And once we have dismissed moral considerations, we can freely admit that there is majesty and beauty in the combat of such opponents as a tiger and a python. There are other exciting fights in "Bring 'em Back Alive," but the tiger-python contest, which fortunately for both combatants results in a draw, is far and away the most interesting thing that has been shown on the screen for a long time.

It may be proper to inquire whether the fact that this film is essentially a record of actual life has not also contributed something to its appeal. Unhesitatingly we say that it has. Facts as such are not necessarily interesting. But unfamiliar facts are. And after the reels of stereotyped fiction that make up most of the films, it is a decided relief to see something that springs straight from life and has preserved its natural form and color. Wild life in a jungle is not the only natural subject to have found its way to the screen this week. We have had some magnificent views of the Tyrolean Alps, with an exciting ski run through the mountains, in "The Doomed Battalion" (Rivoli)—a picture which in its fictional material and its treatment does not rise much above the mediocre, although, having been made in Germany, it is slightly less conventional than the war pictures of Hollywood.

We have also had a more intelligent picture than ordinarily comes out of Hollywood, "The Dark Horse" (Winter Garden), whose claim to distinction is its good-natured but merciless lampooning of the cant and ballyhoo of American politics. Here again one is impressed not so much by the story, which is a little far-fetched and scarcely reveals an honest grappling with real facts, as by the general picture of the dishonesty and racketeering which rule election campaigns in this country. The film is further marked by amusing and pointed dialogue, and on the whole is very competently acted.

ALEXANDER BAKSHY